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Journal

The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 538(1)

ISSN

0002-7162

Author

LEONARD, KAREN

Publication Date

1995-03-01

DOI

10.1177/0002716295538000018

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Peer reviewed

argue, along with Linz, that parliamentarism is more conducive to stable democracy than presidentialism, due to the greater propensity of parliamentarism to have majorities that allow the implementation of programs and the flexibility to remove an unpopular executive.

The analysts of country cases differ as well in their assessment of presidentialism. Suleiman highlights the positive contributions of presidentialism to the stabilization of the French political system. For Chile, Valenzuela sees in presidentialism one of the major sources of democratic instability, given Chile's polarized party system. Thus he strongly recommends parliamentarism. For Uruguay, Gonzalez and Gillespie claim that while presidentialism alone has not been the cause of democratic breakdown, it has contributed to it by freezing governments that were unable to deal with crisis situations and by hindering the formation of interparty coalitions to obtain governing majorities.

The constitutional debate in Brazil is examined by Lemounier, who shows the perils of presidentialism in Brazilian political history and the emergence of the parliamentarist demand, which grew prior to the plebiscite of 21 April 1993 but was ultimately defeated. In the case of Colombia, Hartlyn shows the problems of excessive presidentialism and argues that the new constitution of 1991 seeks to restrict presidential powers in an attempt to further democratize the political system by moving away from a restrictive bipartisanship.

For Ecuador, Conaghan discusses the perils of presidentialism, yet she clearly expresses her disagreement with Linz's parliamentary solution, claiming that in the Ecuadoran context of a loose multi-party system, parliamentarism could simply engender new destabilizing tendencies. McClintock's analysis of Peru follows similar lines: presidentialism as such is not the problem, but the political

context in which presidentialism exists is. In the case of Peru, a major cause of breakdown has been the intense conflict between the oligarchy, the military, and the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA). Finally, for Venezuela, Coppedge presents a sweeping critique of presidentialism and sees the current political crisis as fundamentally a product of it.

This book clearly succeeds in showing the problems of presidentialism for democratic stability. It offers rich theoretical reflections and empirical accounts. It is less successful, however, in advancing the notion that parliamentarism is a better alternative for securing democratic stability.

ROSARIO ESPINAL

Temple University
Philadelphia
Pennsylvania

*AFRICA, ASIA, AND
LATIN AMERICA*

CHAKRAVERTY, SUMITA S. *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema, 1947-1987*. Pp. 341. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994. \$50.00. Paperbound, \$19.95.

This fine study sweeps through forty years of India's Hindi films, choosing those that illustrate the author's thesis that India's "national cinema" has a "contaminating, masquerading, impersonating impulse at its very heart." Sumita Chakraverty shows beautifully the tensions and contradictions of India's national project through deft analysis of many films, contextualizing the films in successive periods of government-Bollywood (the Bombay film industry) economic and political relationships. Given the number of Hindi talkies produced—5074 from 1947 to 1987, she tells us—her choice of films is bound to be idiosyn-

cratic, but she does comment on three of the four biggest hits in her time period, according to a 1993 Pune-based research group: *Mother India*, *Mughal-e-Azam*, and *Sholay*; she omits *Jai Santoshi Maa*, a mythological film.

The most appreciative readers will be those based in cultural studies and literary criticism. A quote gives the flavor of her writing: "As an orienting principle, impersonation allows us not only to identify strategies of representation and terms of cinematic address but also to conceive impersonation itself as a metaphoric site of struggle between different conceptions of a national-popular culture." Yet the discussions of the films themselves are very accessible, and those I have seen were recalled vividly by her readings.

Her analysis of the Hindu-Muslim theme is perhaps muted (as is the Bombay cinema's handling of the theme, she points out), given its contemporary relevance, but her analysis of the national heroic image is masterful. Her own language best shows her insights:

This distinct tendency . . . to both identify and nullify marks of [intercultural] difference in a wide variety of textual situations allows national identity to surface as so many styles of the flesh. . . . Woman, . . . unlike man, cannot change herself at will, cannot adopt and discard identities to signify a wider social embrace. . . . it is her fixity that allows the hero to narcissistically [display] his body. . . . Forms of masquerade ironically provide the connective tissue, as it were, across the social body so that difference, like beauty, is presented as only skin deep (pp. 200, 215, 234).

The two final chapters, on the "new wave" or "regional cinemas" from the late 1960s and on the courtesan film as the site for exploration and renegotiation of national assumptions about sexuality, social mores, and a certain repression of possibilities for women, are particularly fascinating.

This wonderful book stretches and stimulates the reader's mind and will

send many of us to our local rental outlet for Hindi films!

KAREN LEONARD

University of California
Irvine

EVANS, RICHARD. *Deng Xiaoping and the Making of Modern China*. Pp. x, 339. New York: Viking, 1994. \$27.95.

There are already a fair number of biographies of Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping: a 1988 study by Uli Franz, a somewhat premature retrospective issue of the *China Quarterly* in 1993, and, that same year, a story of his life by his daughter. In the book under review, Richard Evans, a British diplomat with extensive experience in China, including a tour as ambassador from 1984 to 1988, writes clearly, accurately, and often insightfully but does not add much to what others have done.

Evans relies upon a small number of secondary sources, official works, and interviews with a number of Party historians who "entertained" him on a visit to Peking after his retirement. Harrison Salisbury, in *The New Emperors*, used similar sources, but Evans seems to lack Salisbury's nose for the salacious detail that inquiring minds want to know. Deng's life was probably more staid than that of many of his colleagues, but most readers will probably be more curious than Evans shows himself to be about the episode in the 1930s when Deng was disgraced and his Party superior, who conducted the purge, then took to himself Deng's wife.

The most disappointing thing about the book is the paucity of personal detail. Evans is not a professional scholar, and it may not be to the point to fault his book for lacking pedantry. But he makes little use of his on-the-spot experience. There